

Message Text

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FOR AMBASSADOR RICHARDSON, LOS DELEGATION

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLOS

SUBJECT: DAVID BRODER ARTICLE IN WASHINGTON POST: LAWS
OF THE SEA: A SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS

1. FOLLOWING IS ARTICLE BY DAVID S. BRODER APPEARING IN
WASHINGTON POST OF MARCH 19, 1978, OPED PAGE.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

-- THE UNITED NATIONS LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE IS A
BUREAUCRATIC JUNGLE. ITS PATHS ARE GUARDED BY SUCH IMPROB-
ABLE CREATURES AS THE GROUP OF 77 AND THE EVEN STRANGER
LLGDS WHICH, YOU WILL NEVER GUESS, STANDS FOR 53"LANDLOCKED
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AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DEPRIVED STATES."

-- WHILE SOME OF YOU ARE MARVELING ABOUT HOW THE WORLD EVER
SURVIVED UNTIL THE LATE 20TH CENTURY WITHOUT INVENTING THE
CONCEPT OF "GEOGRAPHICAL DEPRIVATION," LET ME SNEAK IN,
FAST, THE SUGGESTION THAT SOMETHING IMPORTANT IS AT STAKE
AT THIS ALMOST FIVE-YEAR-OLD INTERNATIONAL MEETING WHEN IT

RESUMES FOR A SHOWDOWN SESSION IN GENEVA LATER THIS MONTH.

-- ELLIOT L. RICHARDSON, WHO WAS RECRUITED FROM THE FORD CABINET BY PRESIDENT CARTER AS AMBASSADOR TO THIS CONFERENCE,

DESCRIBES IT AS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT CURRENT TEST OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH ITS COMMON PROBLEMS.

-- THE PAST YEARS' WORK HAS PRODUCED AGREEMENT THAT THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF THE OCEANS -- PRINCIPALLY THE TRILLIONS OF TONS AND DOLLARS WORTH OF COBALT, COPPER, NICKEL AND MANGANESE LYING IN NODULES ON THE OCEAN FLOOR -- ARE THE JOINT HERITAGE OF ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

-- THERE IS ALSO AGREEMENT THAT THE MINING, MARKETING AND USE OF THESE RESOURCES SHOULD BE REGULATED BY AN INTERNATIONAL BODY AND THE BENEFITS SHARED EQUITABLY BETWEEN THE ADVANCED COUNTRIES, WITH THE TECHNOLOGY AND CAPITAL TO DO THE JOB, AND THE UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE GROUP OF 77.

-- YET AS RICHARDSON HEADS BACK TO GENEVA FOR A FINAL TWO-MONTH PUSH, HE SAYS THERE IS PROBABLY ONLY A ONE-IN-THREE CHANCE THAT THIS SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL VENTURE CAN BE RESCUED FROM SELF-DESTRUCTION.

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-- THE REASON IS THAT THERE ARE TWO PRINCIPLES THAT THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER ADVANCED, INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES ARE INSISTING BE PRESERVED -- OR THEY WILL FORSAKE THE EFFORT TO BREAK NEW GROUND IN INTERNATIONAL LAW AND INSTEAD SANCTION DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEEP-SEA MINERALS BY THEIR OWN COMPANIES UNDER EXISTING INTERNATIONAL LAWS.

-- THOSE PRINCIPLES ARE BEING RESISTED BY THE BLOC OF UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES. THEY APPEAR TO BE READY TO GIVE UP THE BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE SOME OF THEIR OWN IDEOLOGICAL PREFERENCES.

-- ONE ISSUE IS THE CHARACTER OF VENTURES THAT WILL OPERATE IN THIS NEW FRONTIER OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT. THE GROUP OF 77 WANTS TO CREATE "THE ENTERPRISE" (STEADY ON, YOU STAR TREK FANS), AS AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC MONOPOLY WHOSE PRICING, MARKETING AND OTHER POLICIES WOULD BE SET IN THE SAME WAY THAT STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES ARE RUN IN SOCIALIST ECONOMIES.

-- THE UNITED STATES AND THE OTHER INDUSTRIAL NATIONS ARE

HOLDING OUT FOR A MIXED SYSTEM. IT WOULD FORCE THE ENTERPRISE TO COMPETE WITH PRIVATE FIRMS AND CONSORTIUMS, IMPOSING THE DISCIPLINE OF THE MARKET ON THE BUREAUCRATIC-POLITICAL DECISIONS THAT CAN BE EXPECTED OF THE ENTERPRISE.

-- IN THIS ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF A MARKET ECONOMY,

RICHARDSON SAYS, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT WAVERED FROM THE STANCE TAKEN BY ITS REPUBLICAN PREDECESSORS.

-- THE SECOND ISSUE IS ONE OF INTERNAL POLITICS IN THE ENTERPRISE. THE UNITED STATES WANTS A VOTING-CONTROL SYSTEM THAT WOULD FORCE THE MANAGERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO BALANCE THE INTERESTS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PRODUCING AND CONSUMING COUNTRIES, OF THOSE WHO WILL SUPPLY SKILLS AND CAPITAL AND THOSE WHO WILL PROVIDE MARKETS.

-- THE GROUP OF 77 WANTS A STRAIGHT ONE-NATION, ONE-VOTE DEAL, WHICH WOULD GIVE PREDICTABLE CONTROL TO THE UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS AND WHICH RICHARDSON SAYS "BEARS NO RATIONAL RELATIONSHIP EITHER TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY OR TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF POWER, VALUES AND INTERESTS."

-- "TO ALLOW RESOURCES CONSTITUTING THE COMMON HERITAGE OF MANKIND TO BE DISPOSED OF BY A NOSE-COUNT OF NATIONS WOULD BE A BAD PRECEDENT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION-BUILDING OF THE FUTURE," RICHARDSON SAYS.

-- AND THAT RAISES ONE FINAL INTERESTING POINT. FOR THE OUTCOME OF THE STRUGGLE IN GENEVA -- AND MAKE NO MISTAKE, IT IS BEING WAGED WITH A CUNNING AND A PASSION THAT LEAVES NO DOUBT THE INSIDERS UNDERSTAND WHAT IS INVOLVED -- WILL SAY MUCH ABOUT ISSUES THAT ARE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE RESOURCES BELOW THE OCEANS.

-- THE UNITED NATIONS WILL SOON CONVENE A CONFERENCE ON THE GENERAL ISSUE OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FROM DEVELOPED TO UNDERDEVELOPED LANDS. THERE ARE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO BE RESOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY. AND THE WHOLE FRONTIER OF OUTER SPACE AS A SITE FOR SCIENCE AND ENERGY-COLLECTION HAS YET TO BE FACED. THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE -- WHETHER A SUCCESS OR FAILURE -- WILL SERVE AS A PRECEDENT FOR THESE OTHER QUESTIONS.

-- ALL THIS AND MORE MAKES THE GENEVA TALKS WORTH WATCHING.

END TEXT.

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